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Letter dated 14 March 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you of irresponsible statements recently made by officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran that clearly reveal the true state of affairs with respect to Iran's official position and its intentions, which are other than peaceful, in the context of its occupation since 1971 of three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, namely the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa.

The United Arab Emirates condemns these statements, which have included, by way of example, that recently made to certain newspapers by Iran's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kamal Kharrazi, to the effect that: "Iran's position is firm in its rejection of negotiations concerning the Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb islands, on the grounds that they are Iranian territory. As for Abu Musa island, there is a 1971 agreement between Iran and Sharjah on that subject." The Minister also defended the Iranian military installations that have been built on the Greater Tunb and the Lesser Tunb, saying: "This is our territory and we have the right to use it for any purpose whatever."

Likewise, the statements made a few days ago by the commander in chief of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, Major-General Rahim-Safavi, included the following: "The forces of the Guard, the Army and the Volunteers in Iran are monitoring all hostile military movements". In the course of the same remarks he also warned that "Iranian forces will cut off the hands of any aggressor who tries to encroach upon Iranian islands and shores", in a reference to the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates that Iran is occupying.

Furthermore, in a statement by the National Security and Foreign Relations Committee of the Iranian Consultative Assembly it was stated that: "The islands are part of Iranian territory, and whoever tries to start a fire in the area will be the first to be burnt by it". This was in response to the final communiqué adopted by the Arab Parliament at its thirty-eighth session, held in Abu Dhabi in February 2001, which expressed firm and continuing support for the legitimate rights of the United Arab Emirates in seeking the return of three of its islands occupied by Iran, namely the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa.

The United Arab Emirates categorically rejects these irresponsible Iranian statements. They are indeed incompatible in substance with the declared policy of the Iranian Government, which advocates the peaceful resolution of differences, an

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end to the escalation of tension and the endeavour to promote confidence-building measures and peaceful coexistence between neighbouring States. The United Arab Emirates regards such statements as constituting an encroachment on its national sovereignty and territorial integrity and indeed as a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. It holds the Iranian Government responsible for any adverse consequences that may ensue from an escalation of propaganda that undermines peace, security and stability in the Arabian Gulf region and in the world as a whole.

The United Arab Emirates reaffirms its established position that the three islands in question, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, which have been occupied by Iran since 1971, are an integral part of the national and territorial sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates. This is true regardless of how long the occupation may have lasted and is based on the historical and legal facts and evidence. The peaceful resolution of the dispute requires that the Islamic Republic of Iran should have the necessary political will and that it should respond to the peace initiatives announced by the State President, His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan (may God preserve him), which call for ending the Iranian occupation of our three islands by peaceful means through serious and genuine bilateral negotiations or by referring the issue to the International Court of Justice. We also reaffirm that the achievement of peace, security and stability in the Arabian Gulf region and the strengthening of bilateral relations in all areas between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Arab States, and in particular the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, will require an end to the Iranian occupation of our three islands, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, respect for the national and territorial sovereignty of each State, the renunciation of the threat to use force in the resolution of disputes and the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, in the region in accordance with the relevant international principles, norms and conventions.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammad J. **Samhan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative